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Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon Design in Practise [sic] Within the City of Perth

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Bachelor of Arts Visual Arts Honours

<u>Jeremy Bentham's 'Panopticon Design'</u>

<u>in practise within the City of Perth.</u>

Supervisor: Dr Neville Weston, Dean of Visual Arts
Submission: Monday 9th of December 1996

ABSTRACT

This thesis outlines an investigation of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon Design that identifies the mechanisms of power which are found to be inherent characteristics within new surveillance technologies. The study includes a discussion of the Perth City Council's implementation of the surveillance program in October 1991 including a detailed analysis of the cultural centre public space.

Material provided by Gerard Martinet from the City of Perth, and the Security Industry helped establish a factual ground to form the basis of the investigation. I have sourced a number of academic texts from university libraries, particularly Murdoch University, Curtin University and The University of Western Australia. These texts have offered a broad reading and position from which to start the theoretical framework.

I explore Foucault's post structuralist texts by qualitative methodology and comparative analysis, drawing discussion to new surveillance technologies and their impact and use within the City of Perth. A discussion on the decline of the city gave reference to Stanley Cohen for an assessment of the state of society and the current justifications for surveillance technologies. I then identify artists who show how it is appropriate for them to produce work that deals with socio-political concerns and issues that function as social commentary.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature.

Date.*2nd December 96*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I gratefully acknowledge the full year support of my primary supervisor,
Professor Neville Weston, Dean of the School of Visual Arts.
I also thank Nikki Miller for her help in the final stages of the thesis.

I dedicate this thesis to Michael,
for his support during the writing of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Within Perth's most popular consumer zones; Forrest Chase, the Cultural Centre, Northbridge, Murray Street and Hay Street Malls, the public are free to wander and rest in areas designed and planned by the City of Perth Council. To ease the burden of shopping, to stop for lunch with friends, to walk through to the bus or train terminal, or because some have nowhere else to go, these are Perth's most congested areas of public thoroughfare. I wonder how many people are aware of the surveillance cameras installed by the Perth City Council. Are the general public aware they are being watched by seventy-three auto iris, high power zoom cameras on closed circuit TV as they wander through Perth public space? Does the presence of the cameras inhibit or alter the behaviour of those who feel their high tech gaze?

I remember the installation of surveillance cameras five years ago within Perth's Malls and public access ways and was horrified at the 'Orwellian' nature of such an idea. I had always known Perth to be a reasonably safe city at night (with caution) and thought the cameras an unnecessary invasion of public rights. Stark realities of 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', once fictitious, were beginning to materialise. Five years after the initial installation of cameras, and with five years of education within the Visual Arts, perhaps now, I am more able, to present a reaction based on the prior response by providing a balanced discussion on surveillance technologies in which I can present my concerns and qualify them with theories I have researched.

In Chapter One this thesis initiates a discussion on the characteristics of surveillance through an examination of the closed circuit camera installations in the Public Malls of The City of Perth. I will introduce Jeremy Bentham's 'Design for the Panopticon Penitentiary' so to establish a greater knowledge of these qualities and characteristics of the Panopticon and reveal the layers of power associated with such a surveillance apparatus. I wish to highlight these mechanisms of power and draw attention to the City of Perth's surveillance system making a comparison with the 1791 design for a Panopticon Penitentiary. Through all the issues raised in this paper, I'm attempting to assemble an analysis of the City of Perth's surveillance system beyond the Perth City Council's rationalities to reveal and challenge the unstated, the unseen, the unaccountable and perhaps the unacceptable.

Following an examination of Foucault's term, 'technologies of power' Chapter One ends with a discussion on the concept of 'biopower' and the combinations of knowledge and power found through 'hierarchal observation' and 'normalizing judgement'. Chapter Two will focus on the camera installations within Perth's public spaces continuing the comparison between Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon design and its contemporary equivalent, the City of Perth's surveillance system. The rationalities for Perth's surveillance system will be put forth within this chapter where questions on the extent and the purpose of the surveillance system will be posed whilst drawing attention to the irony apparent within the "See You in the City!" promotion which was simultaneously released with the City of Perth's camera installations.

This leads onto Chapter Three where reference is made to Stanley Cohen's, the 'Decline of the City' that identifies capitalism as being responsible for many of the problems associated with anti-social behaviour and crime. I will draw attention to such issues as the loss of community and the subsequent 'society of strangers', and discuss how this relates to contemporary cities following with reference to Argyle and Cook's examination of the loss of social gaze within large populated areas like those of cities. It is an examination that offers criticism on camera installations within the Perth Public Space and their unqualified and unassessed nature of surveillance.

As will be shown by the examples of recent misuses of surveillance equipment, questions need to be asked and considered about this form of surveillance. Examples of how operators have abused their positions of trust and their responsibilities associated with being professional operators of these comprehensive surveillance apparatuses. As revealed, these misuses were examples of electronic voyeurism that transformed electronic surveillance from a tool designed to identify deviance, to a mechanism of deviance. I discuss in depth two incidents involving a City of Perth surveillance operator, and a Burswood Casino operator. They are examples that raise the question of who regulates the regulators?

In Chapter Four I will use the work of Simon Davies to analyse the increasing use of surveillance and the current justifications for these technologies that I see growing within the commercial and private domains. Reference is also made to the constructed rationalities produced within popular local news and the subsequent use of surveillance footage where programme presenters spend much time in presenting surveillance technologies as a successful means of catching the criminal. Simon Davies raises this same issue presented as an argument that these initiatives are being used to catch the cheats, which therefore silences criticism for such an apparatus. Davies then proceeds with an examination of the varying use of technologies placing them within certain categories of technology according to their effects on the liberty and freedom of the population.

Chapter Five introduces artists and writers that make comment to important socio-contemporary issues through their creative production. I want to show how it is appropriate for artists and writers to adopt this role and show how visual artists' through their practice can encourage viewers to interact with the issues they are presenting. Following this, I will outline the reasons for involving my work with issues surrounding surveillance technologies in public space. Concerns for surveillance within the public space have been set in writing before in 1949 with George Orwell's characterisation of Big Brother and the Thought Police in his book 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'. I will introduce Orwell's writing as a form of social commentary written in response to his socio-political environment and discuss the contribution 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' has made to public consciousness.

Placing art as social comment within an international context I will introduce a discussion on Hans Haacke's work with some examples of exhibitions that drew the public's attention to certain socio-political issues, therefore involving the work within a social commentary. As I will show, Hans Haacke adopts a role of disseminating information to the public, and attempts to raise the public's awareness through the visual arts and its position on the gallery stage. I will also introduce Perth artist Ma Bucknell, who draws attention to socio-political issues through his public performance within the stage of Perth public space. An artist who encourages the audience to participate in his interactive performances to the cameras within the public space. It is here that we discuss the viewers' involvement with interactive installation and how their involvement with surveillance technologies educates the viewer of the inherant characteristics.

It is a discussion that will conclude with an examination of Julia Scher's ideas and installations that incorporated closed circuit camera equipment. This discussion will also refer to the collaborative work of Wendy Kirkup and Pat Naldi who coordinated a video production that involved themselves as subjects under surveillance within prominent public spaces. The result of this project was presented as twenty, ten second sequences broadcast daily on regional television during commercial breaks.

It should become obvious from reading this paper that there exist concerns with surveillance in public spaces, and that there is a debate surrounding many important issues and questions regarding the state of our cities and the use of public space. This thesis draws attention to important issues associated with surveillance technologies by comparing Michel Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon Penitentiary and the City of Perth camera installation. It is hoped that this comparison will raise the profile of Art as Social Comment and help cement the place of visual artists as social commentators within contemporary society.

CHAPTER I

JEREMY BENTHAM'S PANOPTICON DESIGN

Within 'Discipline and Punish'(1979), Michel Foucault theorises on Jeremy Bentham's architectural Panopticon Design of a penitentiary designed to place a supervisor in the central tower with power of surveillance over the inmates. The annular building is divided into an outer ring which is then further divided into individualised cells, extending the width of the outer ring, backlit by large windows on the peripheral wall, and open to the speculation of the central tower through front glass walls. Foucault compares the cells to small theatres which place the separated inmates in full lighting, allowing the supervisor to see constantly and to recognise immediately. This architectural mechanism produces a visibility / invisibility guarantee of order as Foucault explains:

"Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order." (1979, p200)

While the Panopticon governs by gaze from the central tower, it is a gaze that is detached from the bearer and therefore desubjectivized. As Miran Bozovic states within his introduction to 'The Panopticon Writings' of Jeremy Bentham, *"With this, the first step in the construction of God is taken. A gaze that cannot be pinned down to any particular bearer tends to acquire exceptional powers, and by themselves, as it were, constitute divine attributes."* (1995, p11) This watching gaze objectifies the inmates within their theatre cells forcing on them an imposed visibility of power of the central tower. This is an important function to Bentham's principle, ensuring that surveillance is permanent in its effects and that power should be visible and unverifiable.

Foucault explains the Visible/Unverifiable nature of surveillance within the Panopticon Penitentiary, *"Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so."* (1979, p. 201) This omnipresence of constant supervision is what renders the supervision unnecessary. *"Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."* (1979, p201)

To perfect the Panopticon architectural apparatus and ensure the unverifiable nature of surveillance, Bentham designed partitions within the central tower that intersected the central observation hall at right angles. To avoid any noise, light or any evidence that could betray the position of the guardian when passing from one quarter to another, Bentham drew plans for zig - zag openings instead of doors which eliminated any shadow of movement. The occupation of the central observation hall would be undisclosed behind large glass windows shielded by an impervious array of venetian blinds. Foucault suggests(1979, p202) Bentham's design allowed an anonymous exercise of power, where an individual, taken almost at random, can take on the supervisor's position and operate the machine.

Foucault discusses the effects upon the inmates *"The more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are, the greater the risk of being supervised and the greater his anxious awareness of being observed. The Panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power." "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection."(Foucault, 1979, pp202-203)*

THE PANOPTICON IN THE CITY OF PERTH

"The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheral ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen." (Foucault pp201-202) This is a parallel to the relationship created by the design and installation of surveillance cameras within Perth City. The camera operators have control over what they view, so the public are totally seen, without ever seeing; and the mechanical eye sees everything without ever being seen, leaving the operator in privacy. The camera operator has the potential to see constantly and to recognise and act upon any suspicious behaviour, thus placing the public in a position of visibility, always the object of information, never a subject in communication.

The camera installations within Perth are also characteristic of the visible / unverifiable principle so important to the Panopticon apparatus. As the public become familiar with the visible presence of the cameras in black domes a whole semiotic relationship unveils. Upon recognising the black surveillance domes, the public are then immediately aware of being watched by cameras operated by security guards or police, but are they being watched? These black domes however, on the visible dome side, are opaque and therefore make surveillance unverifiable. As housing for the cameras, they cover, and therefore disguise the direction of the gaze of the camera.

The strategy of reflective blackdomes for camera housing originated within the security industry and were designed with the intention of disguising the direction of the cameras' gaze, thus making surveillance unverifiable. When analysing the design of these surveillance domes installed by the City of Perth, I can't avoid recognising the functionality of such designs in protecting expensive technological equipment from both theft and intentional damage also allowing the camera to rotate a full 360 degrees. Infact, the design is so successful in making surveillance unverifiable, that the Security Industry sells dummy domes and dummy cameras as a cheaper alternative to the operational cameras! This is then evidence of a merging semiotic language surrounding the design of the black dome.

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Both the Panopticon Penitentiary and the camera installations within the City of Perth are a form of architectural apparatus. The Penitientiary used the gaze as a 'corrective mechanism' within an enclosed environment placing the tower central to the cellmates' vision inside a very uniform structure. The City cameras' gaze is interspersed throughout the public space directed at people from a dominant position of a hierarchal gaze due to the high vantage point inherantly characteristic of surveillance technologies. The City of Perth has designed the camera installations to integrate the camera poles and mounts in alignment with the existent lighting poles and fixtures in an attempt to 'naturalise and blend' the installation and presence of surveillance cameras. I believe this sort of planning borders on being covert within public space.

With the permanent installation of cameras within our Malls, surveillance has become a part of our daily lives which forces a consciousness of the presence of surveillance cameras upon those it is directed within the City. From first recognition the black domes are all too visible, and make engagement of mutual gaze with the cameras unverifiable. My mutual gaze with the camera however may be directed to no-one as the unverifiable nature of surveillance extends through the circuit of equipment to the operator's variable use of the viewing monitors. As the Penitientiary used the gaze as a corrective mechanism, these effects can equally have corrective influences over those under the gaze.

Within this comparison, the supervisor of the Penitientiary and the operator of the City cameras take observation positions at one central point; the supervisor watching imprisoned people through glass theatres from the central tower, and the operator scrutinising the public through closed circuit monitors within the City of Perth Observation Room. The difference is in the use of technological equipment where a sequential switcher has replaced the central tower and its corridors, and the monitors have replaced the glass walls of the cells. These black domes would equally keep the position of the supervisor within the panopticon unverifiable.

It is interesting to understand such a powerful architectural apparatus of surveillance as the Panopticon design, which made for an eighteenth century penitentiary, established characteristics of surveillance that are found within public spaces of Western contemporary societies. These inherent mechanisms of power characteristic to the Panopticon present a physical and visible metaphor of the black domes to that of the central tower. This regulatory mechanism and the surrounding semiotic language develops a consciousness of the gaze of the black dome within public space, which as will be shown, can have coersive effects on public behaviour under 'the examination'.

FOUCAULT'S TECHNOLOGIES OF POWER

Foucault identifies the two combining techniques that induce effects of power on the individual within 'the examination'. These authoritative techniques consist of an observing hierarchy and a normalising judgement. The observing hierarchal gaze is a technique of power through planned architecture and the creation of an internal, controlled space that renders all visible inside it. Normalising judgement subjugates individuals through the establishment of constant visibility making it possible to differentiate, to classify and judge them. (1979, p184) The function of the gaze within the examination is a coercive one that regulates behaviour through the organisation of power and the threat of disciplinary punishment upon individuals who depart from correct behaviour.

Foucault explains this coercive function of the gaze within hierarchal observation. *"The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible." (1979, pp170-171)* He then goes on to say, *"The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly ...A perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned." (1979, p173)* To produce this perfect disciplinary apparatus and place an alert gaze everywhere, there must be a ceaseless functioning of the examination in place.

The same principles of the examination are active within the City of Perth's arrangement of the closed circuit surveillance cameras and their power of surveillance over the public areas. As Foucault discusses, there are qualities that perfect this normalising exercise of power on individuals. Qualities such as intervention; *"because it is possible to intervene at any moment and because the constant pressure acts even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed."* also using the apparatus of power as a deterrent, *"it acts directly on individuals; it gives 'power of mind over mind'".....* and, *"it assures it's efficacy by it's preventative character, its continuous functioning and its automatic mechanisms."* (1979, p. 206) This assurance of power is achieved through the continuous exercise of surveillance, thus making surveillance and its techniques of the examination omnipresent.

Paul Hirst tells us Bentham called his Panopticon Design an 'idea in architecture'. *"The idea is a construction, a space that makes possible both a certain discourse and certain power relations. The Panopticon is both a construction and a 'statement' in construction. It is a space and a site of a certain form of productive power. The gaze of the inspector in the tower is a form of power-knowledge, productive both of control over subjects and of the remodelling of their conduct."(1993, p57)* In relation to Foucault's term of 'bio-power', Foucault identifies the human body as an object to be manipulated and controlled, through the organisation of individuals in space, made possible by a specific enclosure of space.(1984, p17)

Camera installations of the City of Perth create a spacial mapping of a specific space. The cameras provide the visual information sent through the closed circuit equipment, which gives an organised view of the public space. This organisation, as Rabinow outlines, creates *"A new set of operations, of procedures-those joinings of knowledge and power that Foucault calls 'technologies'-come together around the objectification of the body."* This objectification provides knowledge of the individuals which combines to form the disciplinary technology that functions as normalising judgement upon the individuals, hence ensuring the correct behaviour of individuals. This architectural apparatus then functions to ensure the aims and techniques of the government of societies (1984, p17).

The Panopticon mechanism of surveillance, as Foucault claims, *"...is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power."*(1979, p202) The vantage point characteristic of all camera installations, places the public in an extremely visible position beneath the gaze of the cameras. With an understanding of the technologies of power inherent within the City of Perth surveillance system, I refer again to Foucault and his comment of caution. *"But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use."* (1979, p. 205)

CHAPTER II

THE CITY OF PERTH IN FOCUS

What is the need for such a comprehensive surveillance system through the public spaces of the city of Perth? The city of Perth has lost much of its small personal side with a growing metropolitan population and an increasing number of people choosing to shop and visit the city. This increase in shoppers has been a result of the recent success of the Perth City Council's promotion slogan, "See you in the City!". This slogan, played on radio and television, focuses on generating people's interest to shop and visit the city. These efforts to rejuvenate the city, to promote the city, followed a decline in profit suffered by Perth retailers in the mid 1980's. The loss of profit was related to the undesirable image of the city painted by the media during that time.

The reported retail decline placed increasing pressure on the Perth City Council to improve the image of the city of which safety was a particularly important point. Security guards had been employed at a considerable cost to the council and there were still risks to public property. Following the Murray Street Mall conversion programme in 1989 and the success of the closed circuit camera installation within the new underground docking and loading facilities beneath Forest Chase, the Perth City Council in conjunction with the Perth Metropolitan Police Force, promoted project 'City Safe' and extended the use of surveillance cameras into the malls and public areas. In their endeavour to increase safety within the city streets by installing a network of surveillance cameras, the City of Perth created a paradox with the "See you in the City!" slogan inviting the public into the city to be seen by their cameras within the city space.

The "See you in the City!" campaign depicts people enjoying the city and the pleasures it has to offer, paying particular attention to the large variety of specialty shopping available there. It could be argued that this sort of activity is one that is more available to people with expendable incomes, and could therefore be responsible for the creation of an environmental activity within the city public space that is exclusionary to the unemployed and those in poverty. The emphasis on consuming goods plays a major part within a contemporary commercial environment which, built on competition, subjects everyone to advertising, and it is this commercial emphasis that creates an environment that is perhaps more anti-social than social.

From reading the newsletter entitled 'Citiplace', produced through the Citiplace Advisory Committee for the retail business chain in the city, it was obvious the City Council considers retail business to be of foremost importance. Perth hosted the five day International Malls Conference in October 1991, in which eighty delegates from around Australia and overseas exchanged information on current trends in the development of pedestrian orientated retail shopping precincts. The topics of the conference focussed on, "Fostering Central City Vitality", "Capitalising on Tourism Opportunities", "Retailing and Marketing", and "City Security" (1991, Oct). For this conference, the Perth City Council was proud to boast of their newly installed surveillance system, on show as an example to delegates from around the world.

World trends in pedestrianisation seem to have promoted a set of problems associated with the creation of new spaces for people traffic. It was interesting to read in the 'Councils West'(1995, Winter), *"With the completion of the Forrest Place/City Station development and the creation of the upper level walkways, a number of new spaces provided access to arcades in the CBD. The protection of public and the adjoining private property was a matter of some concern and the new spaces provided additional areas in which anti-social behaviour could occur."* It's understood from this article, with the intention of creating easy public access to retail shopping, the council inadvertently created new spaces that attracted anti-social behaviour; problems such as vandalism, assault and graffiti offences.

THE CULTURAL CENTRE AS PUBLIC SPACE

The cultural centre is one of many public areas currently watched by camera surveillance equipment. I chose to identify this area in detail as the name 'cultural', identifies the space to people; *"of or relating to the cultivation of the mind or manners, esp. through artistic or intellectual activity."*(1990, Concise Oxford Dictionary) By definition one would expect a space that fulfils this cultivation of artistic and intellectual activity. The cultural centre public space is created by its surrounds; the State Museum, the Western Australian Art Gallery, the Alexander State Library, the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and Arts House Galleries. This open space provides a wide traffic zone for pedestrians moving inbetween these five large institutions.

Central to this space, adjoining the Art Gallery, there are wide steps descending to a sunken pond and fountain where some people choose to sit down and enjoy their lunch during the working week. The uses of this public space change significantly on weekends, as the cultural centre is converted into a market place. Other uses of this space include organised public gatherings under a licensed agreement to rally and protest, also a gathering and departure point for leading parades and festivities from the cultural centre area. However, as a functional public space providing facilities to the public, the cultural centre lacks large trees for the creation of shade areas for the public to sit beneath.

The cultural centre is located on the north side of the Perth train station and is inclusive of the perimeter formed by Roe Street, Beaufort Street, Francis and William Streets. There is an adjoining walkway to the central train station, which now further extends to join the Wellington street bus station, attracting a large variety of people through this area. The adjoining carparks; number 11, beneath the Library; number 6, beneath the Art Gallery; number 16, adjoining the train station; all contribute to the heavy pedestrian traffic within this public space. The merging of all these access ways encourage a wide range of people trafficking their way through the cultural centre either passing through Forrest Chase or into Northbridge.

There are a number of public art pieces within the cultural centre that may function as sites for tourist photos, or seating as some public choose to sit on the reclining sculpture by Henry Moore, but none of these pieces function as social comment, as a reflection to Perth public about contemporary issues. A good example of the use of public art as social comment is the 'Trust me' Dingo Flour emblem that still exists, in its faded glory on PICA's tin roof. Neil Roberts painted this during the high profit signpainting days of Alan Bond, in reference to when Bond painted such an emblem for Dingo Flour. Seen in alignment with PICA's roof when the viewer is standing within the cultural centre space, this was painted by Roberts with reference to Bond's Tower, symbolic of power and success.

There are a number of cameras within the cultural centre placed at vantage points for the observation of this area, particularly during the night hours. The open space where the cameras placed every hundred metres apart, continue down James Street and into Russel Square, acts as a merging of access ways that attracts problems that occur in association with the night hours of Northbridge and its bars and clubs. In an article printed in the Sunday Times, on the eighth of October 1995, Chief Inspector of Perth region, Inspector Jim Griffiths said, "Northbridge suffered from a bad public image because it attracted so many people with different cultural values and social habits." In the same article I read, "As well as acting as a deterrent, the cameras allowed police to zoom in on suspect activities."

The public space of the cultural centre was once a site for the street performance group "Subconcious" that would make a habit of spontaneously bursting into performance, interacting with the crowd without rehearsal. Simon Gevers, Luke Murphy and Adam Peaty were the forming members of the street performance group called Subconscious, who decided to cease their public performance in the cultural centre when the City of Perth installed the surveillance cameras. The element of surprise was the very nature of these public improvised performances and the group didn't want all the problems of having to justify their public art performance to the police. This offers an example where the presence of the cameras inhibited the social interactions of people within a public space, especially when considered in accordance with the cultural centre space, where improvised public performance relates to the cultivation of the mind through artistic activities.

CHAPTER III

THE DECLINE OF THE CITY

Problems of anti-social behaviour and vandalism have been identified with the city and have been indicative of the decline of the city for some time. In 'Visions of Social Control' Stanley Cohen refers to Le Corbusier's ideas of, "the good city in the ideal society" as ambitious visions that weren't to be found on the city streets. Cohen states,

"From the end of the 1950's onwards, and with relentless momentum ever since, the cities became the arena for the 'crisis'. Architects and planners, urban renewers and developers, politicians and big business, capitalism itself were all to blame for the decline in the city. As metaphor and social fact, the city became identified with crime, racialism, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, violence and insecurity. The city was a mnemonic not for order, but for the separate parts of a collective cultural nightmare." (1985;p212)

Within this definition of the city Cohen identifies Capitalism to be responsible for creating problems such as crime, racialism, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, violence and insecurity. Indeed, Capitalism's foundation is based on a competitive mass consumption orientated to maximise profit. It is a foundation that divides a population on the basis of its standard of living. Consumption depends solely on a population's monetary wealth, and thus excludes the unemployed and those in poverty. The City of Perth, as an arena of crisis, has experienced increases of vandalism, assault and graffiti offences since the 1980's. It is a crisis indicative of a social decline, and an indicator of a growing division within Perth's population.

The increase in vandalism, assaults and graffiti offences has lead to the introduction of comprehensive surveillance systems, which in turn has lead to a shift in traditional policing from one that targeted specific suspects to a targeting of the domains of crime and a categorical suspicion of everyone within a city's domain. As Sheridan notes in 'Surveillance, Power and Modernity',

"Crime produced the prison, the prison the delinquent class; the existence of a delinquent class an excuse for the policing of the entire population. This policing led to extraction and recording of information about groups and individuals; the human sciences gained a terrain and patron; crime came to be seen as a departure from the Norm, a sickness to be understood if not cured; this provided a justification for the 'examination' of the entire population." (1990, p. 145)

The traditional image of the city as a unique form of social life and as a model of society itself still survives, though invariably today it stands for disorder, chaos and breakdown.(1985, p205) This breakdown prevents the city from ever again being used as a symbol of order or a seat of civilisation and progress, as it now consists of everything that is inhumane and degrading. As Stanley Cohen states, *"...unless we make radical changes, the city of the present - the iconography of violence, crime, insecurity, pollution, traffic congestion, over-crowding - is the society of the future. On the city streets lie the sharpest mirrors of dystopian imagery. "* (1985, p 205) To solve these problems however, a closer look into our society is required.

Cohen writes of the impending problem of social control caused through the loss of community found within mass society in a city. (1985, pp 205-207) As the populations of cities grow, they are subject to an increasingly competitive society that leads to a greater society of strangers. A society of strangers further establishes an environment of mistrust and suspicion. When talking about the role of visibility in social interaction, Argyle and Cook use reference of Vine,

"Mutual gaze is the first step to a social encounter, with shared attention and some degree of co-operation. Individuals may avoid mutual gaze, if they want to avoid the obligations involved,...in small communities there is some recognition and openness to access to everyone. The rev   applies in large cities, where people do not look at one another, or exchange social signals. They are able to tolerate unusual degrees of crowding perhaps because they make no social responses, and in some sense treat each other as objects." (1976, p.113)

So it seems the decline of the city, indicative of a social decline, is related to the size of the population and the problems resulting from a loss of the community within the city environment. The treatment of other people as objects within a large population, further encourages the growth of a society of strangers which then necessitates the greater policing of the state. Increasing vandalism, assault and anti-social behaviour within Perth city is evidence that a large society of strangers are not able to regulate behaviour as a community, for the sheer size of that population adversely affects the socialising factors that are normal to small communities. The objectification of others, allows people to ignore and disassociate themselves from acknowledging other people, thus producing an environment of disrespect.

EXAMPLES FOR THE MISUSE OF SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

Since the implementation of Perth's surveillance system there have been examples of the misuse of such systems. One incident in May 1995 involved a policeman, who, while on surveillance duty within the City of Perth observation room, created a videotape of a number of intrusive and voyeuristic images of female subjects that he collected from the use of the surveillance cameras overlooking public space, particularly in the Hay Street Mall area. I must argue here that the operator of the mechanism of surveillance has misused the equipment, straying away from the intention to supervise the public, turning the surveillance apparatus into a tool or a game for the voyeur. He has misused his position as both guardian and policeman, in his abusive voyerism of female members of the public.

A similar situation occurred within a month of this incident with the misuse of the Burswood Casino's surveillance system where it was reported that a male operator had collected intrusive images of female visitors through the surveillance equipment. The operator made copies of his voyeuristic casino production to sell. The female subjects were ignorant of being watched while the operator of the surveillance system abused the power given to him by the system. These examples of the misuse of surveillance equipment and the abuse of the operators' position draws attention to the question "Who regulates the regulators?"

I have talked with a policeman who had six months experience within the City of Perth observation room and has put most of Northbridge's problems at night down to the Aboriginal populous. It was obvious that he had disrespect for Aboriginal people and he told me the Aboriginal problem in Northbridge is the reason why the surveillance cameras are there. Whether this is true or not, there is always the possibility of an operator, due to their personal attitude, using the device of power to target minority groups.

CHAPTER IV

CURRENT JUSTIFICATIONS FOR SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

I have concerns about increasing surveillance technologies and their overshadowing influence in producing homogeneous effects of power within the public space. With all the recent examples the media has presented of the use of surveillance technologies 'catching people in the act' of doing something wrong, it has been easy to justify the use of such extensive surveillance methods. Simon Davies points this out when commenting on the government's ease in the establishment of surveillance mechanisms.

"The argument that these initiatives are being constructed to catch the cheats has silenced criticism." (1992,p.18) *"Because of powerful arguments of revenue, security and law enforcement, the community complies fully (though sometimes reluctantly) with these mechanisms. There is mass obedience with little or no resistance to the initiatives or their demands. Government agencies have the role of controllers and enforcers of public policy."* (1992, p. 18)

Simon Davies divides technology and technological practices into three categories: Green Technology, Amber Technology and Red Technology.

"Green Technology includes all developments that help to protect rights and freedoms, strengthen democratic institutions, protect privacy, enhance the integrity and strength of relationships within the community, and improve the autonomy of the individual." "Amber Technology can be generally beneficial to the community but is vulnerable to abuse or misuse. Amber Technology is often established by the tripartite agencies to improve revenue systems, monitor welfare payments, or assist law enforcement." "Red Technology poses considerable dangers to the community. Red Technology reduces individual autonomy and rights, binds people to rigorous government requirements, increases the power of institutions, replaces trust with suspicion, reverses the onus of proof (assumes that everyone is guilty until proven innocent) and creates an atmosphere of repression and control in the community." (1992, p.22-23)

The irony I found when attempting to place the City of Perth surveillance system within one of these categories was the council's justification for the surveillance mechanism in helping protect the public's rights. This justification identifies under the Green Technology category. Though as I have discussed, this mechanism is vulnerable to misuse or abuse, therefore identifying it under the Amber Technology category. I could argue further that the camera installation within the City of Perth has replaced trust with suspicion which then identifies the surveillance mechanism within the Red Technology category, also bordering on some of the other definitions within this category. To comment on this, I believe that the burgeoning nature of surveillance exists within our daily lives and could extend to create an all encompassing atmosphere of repression and control in the community.

There is a large increase in the number of forms of camera surveillance within Perth. The police traffic branch use red light cameras, freeway bus/taxi lane cameras, and multi-nova cameras. Department stores and the private sector have spent large sums of money for surveillance systems and security staff to save money from theft. I have been informed by both the security industry and the City of Perth, that there is no legislation for the use of surveillance technologies on private property within Australia. This poses questions about the control on the private use of this technology. George Orwell wrote in his book 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' in 1949 about a society socially controlled by surveillance. With respect to an abuse of the system, a question remains, "Who regulates the owners and controllers of this mechanism of power, when the system can be misused or abused on a small scale?"

Looking at all the disparate surveillance systems, and knowing that the technology is already available, we could one day see one single convergence point where police operators fill a room (central tower) full of monitors, able to trace every step of particular pedestrians singled out from the crowd. An article by Mark Nixon on dataveillance outlines the recent advances in the development of computerised face recognition systems that has the ability to scan a crowd of twenty faces a second and match images against a database of up to one million photographs. (1996, p. 33) It is a frightening prospect that grows more so as the technology is improved.

Employers see the positive results of surveillance methods and are keen to ensure productivity and honesty from their employees. An example of an employer using as Foucault would call it, an imposed visibility of power, exists with an employee of BP service station, when working during the long night shifts on his own, used to take some chocolate from the BP counter. As BP stores have since installed closed circuit surveillance equipment, his employer ensured honesty by leaving the surveillance videotapes on the counter as a subtle acknowledgement of the crime. This is all the employer needed to do to ensure the employee is honest. There was an incident involving parents who suspected the nanny they employed, of abuse and low violence towards the children reported on Monday the 26th of August, on Channel Seven's 'Today Tonight' programme The couple hired a private detective who installed a hidden camera within the family room. This produced the proof the couple needed to dismiss her of her services.

There are a number of recent programs on television that use surveillance footage as a form of entertainment. These shows practise a freedom with the use of this surveillance material. It is as though someone has reels of surveillance material and they had the idea they would turn it into entertainment. "Caught on Camera" is one such show of video surveillance material from store security cameras shown on Channel Nine, and "Police Camera Action", which is another example where all attempted thefts result in arrest. An irony develops as an audience watch petty criminals on television within their private spaces, producing some sort of state voyeurism. The hidden objective within these shows is one that justifies the use of surveillance while socialising the viewers of the powers of surveillance. With the mechanism of surveillance in place, it renders surveillance itself unnecessary.

CHAPTER V

ART AS SOCIAL COMMENT

Historic examples of art as social comment can be found in the 19th century Social Realists and in Soviet Russia in the 1920's. The tendency to use art as a weapon of social change more recently became indicative during the conceptual art developments of the 1960's and 70's when both art and language, and art and information groupings occurred. As a visual artist, my work involves contemporary issues to do with social interaction of people within modern public environments. I see a capacity for artists who wish to use their work as a tool to communicate concerns and raise questions which have relevance to the social transformations that are occurring as societies move toward the twenty-first century. Arnason suggests, *"conceptualism is concerned with the language of art or art as a language,"*(1985, p. 703) it offers artists the avenue to assume many roles including that of social criticism, establishing art as a language for commenting on moral, social or political concerns.

Art that has the potential to carry socio-political messages is exemplified in the work of various mid to late twentieth century artists such as Hans Haacke. Haacke offers an international example of how art can be used within a social context. In an exhibition held in 1970 at the Museum of Modern Art called "Information Show", Haacke created an interactive installation concerned with social comment. In this installation, visitors on entering the exhibition were directed to write down their opinions on current sociopolitical issues and place them within a transparent box provided within the installation. These opinions at various times were tabulated and then posted in prominent positions within the installation for all to see. (Arnason;1985;p704). It was an exhibition that not only invited the viewer to interact with the installation, but also offered an invitation to the viewer to become involved, and hence to contemplate sociopolitical issues.

Another example of the incorporation of sociopolitical issues within a body of art is the exhibition proposed by Hans Haacke in 1971. In this exhibition, shown at the Guggenhiem Museum, Haacke intended to place within a body of art, documents that highlighted contentious aspects associated with particular Manhatten slums. Though this exhibition was cancelled, due to differences arising between Haacke and the museum as to whether the documents represented art, Arnason makes comment that this proposed exhibition was still a successful form of art conceptualisation as the exhibition generated considerable public controversy when the cancellation attracted the attention of the media.(1985, pp. 704 - 705)

When the work of an artist is placed within a space for public exhibition, an avenue forms as a bridge for the artist to establish a visual language that communicates to the viewers. For those who wish to make comment through a production of artworks 'o do with social or political issues, the public exhibition of the work is most important. Placing the art work within the social context allows the visual artist freedom to move out from the gallery and museums into the public space to contribute art as social comment. Through their practise, visual artists do have a role to play as social commentators responding to contemporary society. Artists' input to social comment can often provide the critical knowledge that contributes to the viewers' awareness of important contemporary issues.

George Orwell's book, "Nineteen Eighty-Four" is a good example of written social comment. His insight into the extent of the development of surveillance technologies has to be acknowledged. I refer to Ben Pimlott's comments within the introduction for the 1989 print of "Nineteen Eighty-Four". *"...this singular tale was read widely as social comment, and even prophecy. That it should have been so regarded is not, perhaps, surprising. Drabness, shortages, government red tape were a way of life not just in the novel but in the Britain where it was written. At the same time, totalitarianism was a stalking fear. Nazi Germany in the recent past, Russia and China in the present, framed the Western political consciousness. "* (1989, p. v) It is interesting to consider Orwell tale of future Britain 1984 written in 1949, which presents a society under surveillance which we find not so dissimilar to the modern environments that exist today.

Ma Bucknell is a good example of a local Perth based artist who performs his work as social comment within public space. He has directed his performances to the Perth surveillance camera system in an attempt to raise the socio-political issues that surrounded the initial installation of the cameras. Bucknell always makes the effort to encourage the public to participate in this public performance he entitles 'Place:Less' which as organised performance always has an element of spontaneity. There is also a working title, 'Back(s) to the City!' that parodies the Perth slogan, "See you in the City!" The first performance of Place:Less in March 1993, involved an organised walk through the city while waving to all the surveillance cameras along the way saying, "See you in the City!"

Bucknell talked of his influence from 'The Situationists' of 1958, a group called 'Situations International', living in France, who picked up where the Dadaists left off. Their performance was situationist interventionist and their approach, direct, interpersonal to induce interactions with every body. The Situationists performed the 'derive' which was an organised gathering of the public in the city who would leave from one point and make their way through the city past what they considered good architecture, and see how long it took to complete the walk. Bucknell told me his shows are a 'forced derive', as Perth is too small and there is too much SLOBB, Space Left Over Between Buildings, to enact the intentions of the original derive. A derive however, that as a public gathering within the city, directly claims and affirms the position of the public and their rights within public space.

A prominent quality within the installation of surveillance cameras presents itself within the physical relationship between the subject/s being surveyed and the position of the mechanical gaze. This relationship creates a dominant viewing platform as the cameras look down upon the subject/s in a position of power which brings attention to the hierarchal placement of cameras and the presence of a hierarchal order. I incorporate these characteristics of surveillance technologies within the plans for the placement of objects and viewing apparatus within the construction of installation for my practical work which informs viewers of the characteristics and implications of surveillance.

The semiotics of surveillance techniques can be seen to suggest that the characteristics of power inherent within surveillance technologies target public space from a high vantage point which establishes the operator or owner of the equipment in a position of dominance. Whether people are aware of the cameras presence or not, they are drawn into this subjective relationship by the cameras active gaze. I have installed closed circuit television equipment within Gallery Spaces that invite the voyeuristic inquiry of people to interact with the installation, who then find they are being watched by a camera they didn't notice. This has been interesting to observe, as the viewer adjusts their relationship as observer to find they are the subject of observation, and then to become the object under their own observation.

My concerns about surveillance within the public domain have arisen because as a member of the Perth public, I see that the use of surveillance over deviant behaviour has now come to a technological fore with the installation of the closed circuit monitoring system. The presence of these cameras creates an immediate situation where someone has to observe the closed-circuit monitors and following a notion of normal behaviour, scrutinise the public area for anyone who may deviate from the norm by displaying suspicious or anti-social behaviour. As Foucault would identify, this is normalising judgement in practise which subjugates individuals through the establishment of constant visibility making it possible to differentiate, to classify and judge them. (1979, p184) These judgements however, are only observations that are reduced to visual appearance and therefore leaves people vulnerable to scrutiny according to their appearance and mannerisms.

In the pursuit of increasing public awareness of the layers of power inherent in these surveillance technologies I use a method of interactive installation to involve viewers with the technologies, which in turn, informs them of the powerful characteristics of such appartus which I hope encourages a critical examination of the dominating characteristics of surveillance within the public space. Julia Scher is an installation artist who as Pomeroy states, *"uses surveillance equipment in her artwork, as a stark commentary on the political envelopment of routine surveillance, revealing the pervasive social control mechanisms that mix architectural, behavioural, spatial, numerical, and computer values into new constructs of consumption and control."* (1996, p. 288)

At the Collective for Living Cinema in 1988, Scher featured six switching surveillance monitors facing out the front window, with an architectural plan detailing the location of the cameras and microphones within the installation. Through her artwork, Scher raises questions about the control mechanisms through surveillance. *"She capitalises on representing in a very personal way the contradictions of the security mega-industry: a vast and covert nervous system on the one hand, and the visible threat of data-acquisition on the other. Scher's work is highly ambivalent in the way it juxtaposes the need for protection with the possibility of ultimately becoming the victim of the protective apparatus."* (Pomeroy, pp 289-290)

Wendy Kirkup and Pat Naldi are two English artists who work collaboratively and produced a video entitled 'Search' that focussed on the arrangements of time and space with a synchronised walk through Newcastle-upon-Tyne city centre under the objectifying gaze of the surveillance cameras. Their movements were recorded with the assistance of the Northumbrian Police Force through a sixteen camera surveillance system, which had only recently been installed in the commercial centre. The resulting edited footage consisted of twenty, ten second sequences which were broadcast daily on regional television during commercial breaks between the 21st of June and the 4th of July 1993. As suggested in 'Vade Mecum', Kirkup and Naldi embrace technologies as an opportunity to explore issues and ideas by working within the technology.

CONCLUSION

As has been shown through the comparative analysis of Jeremy Benthan's Panoptican design and the City of Perth's surveillance system, the mechanisms of power that exist within the Panopticon form the duplicate mechanisms of power found within new surveillance technologies. As the examination of Foucault's 'technologies of power' showed, the Panopticon was designed as a mechanism of control. This discussion on 'technologies of power' was intended to provide an understanding of how the Perth City Council's surveillance system was a mechanism of power that functioned upon individuals as a 'normalising' and 'hierarchal' technology of observation.

As we saw in Chapter Two, the City of Perth had a series of rationalities associated with the installation of this technology for the promotion of a safer and more pleasant place to consume. Yet in Chapter Three within the discussion on the decline of the city, Cohen identifies the city as being in a state of crisis. A crisis he had identified due to mass population and capitalism. Increases in assault, vandalism and other acts of social deviation were clear examples of this state of crisis and the Perth City Council's installation of surveillance cameras is indicative of the problem. A surveillance system may enable the police to deal with offences within an area, but doesn't however, solve the fundamental problems coming from the loss of community within a growing society of strangers.

Yet as was seen from the discussion on the misuse of surveillance technologies, these technologies have the potential to be abused. It is this misuse of the technologies of power, misuses that George Orwell spoke of in 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', that this thesis has attempted to draw attention to. Orwell was a writer of social comment, and as was shown, many other artists with a variety of backgrounds, have also entered the realm of social commentary quite successfully. This thesis has attempted to conclude that visual art has the potential to take up the role of a social commentary within contemporary societies.
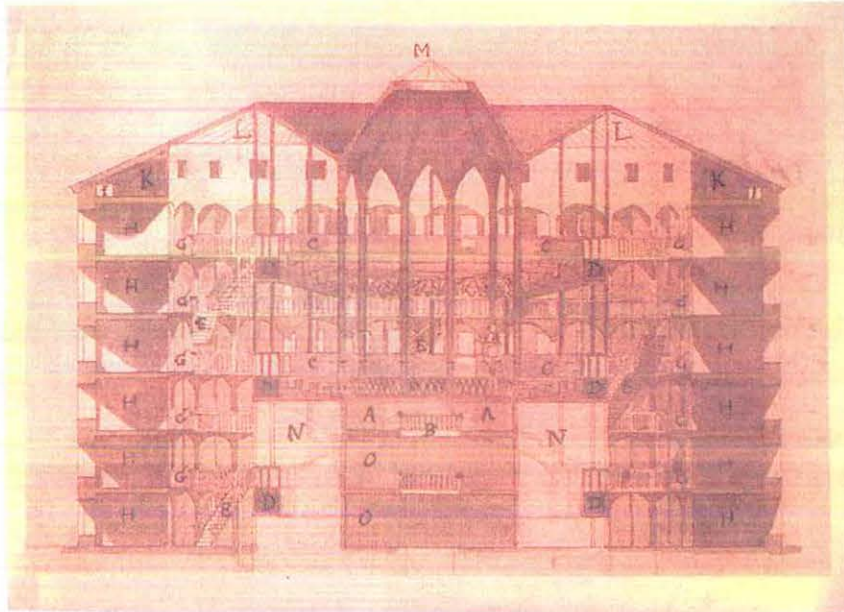
Figure 1: Diagram of the Plan for the Panopticon, by Bentham Mss.

Figure 2: Photograph depicting the highly reflective surface of the surveillance domes taken by Anastasia Bradley

Figure 3: Photograph b, depicting the linear organization of space within the cultural centre and the pole camera's vantage point taken by Anastasia Bradley.

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